developing countries, and different parts of India including AIIMS. Zinc is important in human biology and its deficiency impairs various immune and non immune defence against infections. Low levels of zinc in the cord blood and in infants, particularly so in the low birth weight, who constitute one-third of all births in India and contribute maximally to the increased infant deaths. Neonatal sepsis is an important cause of death in these infants. The intent of the study was to provide a cheap, safe and efficacious treatment in addition to antibiotics for serious bacterial infection in neonates and young infants. The Government of India has been encouraging the public sector companies and the drug industry to prepare cheap dispersible zinc tablets. The Lancet has rated use of zinc in sick children in diarrhea as one of the 10 essential interventions for all child health programmes in the developing world.

(e) 1073 children were admitted for these clinical trials and 42 clinical trials were conducted on these children.

(f) and (g) Yes, Sir. The parents of these children were counselled before these trials and written consent were obtained from the parents/guardians of the children.

Mercury-based medical equipments

94. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
MS. MABEL REBELLO:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that mercury-based instruments especially in the health-sector continue unchecked and it is posing an unabated serious threat to the medicos' health; and

(b) if so, what is the action plan of Government to address this issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) and (b) In so far as Central Government Hospitals in Delhi are concerned, no case of serious threat to the medicos' health has been brought to the notice of the Ministry due to the use of mercury-based instruments. These hospitals have already taken steps to phase out the mercury based equipments gradually to reduce environmental pollution with mercury waste Awareness Campaigns and Training of the health care givers including the maintenance staff on safe handling and reduction of use of mercury based equipments have started. These hospitals also follow the guidelines laid down in the Bio-Medical Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 1998, as amended in 2000 and 2003.

Smoking expenditure

†95. MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) the estimated amount being spent on smoking in the country per year and the expenditure being made on the advertisement of smoking;

(b) the number of persons died of smoking per year and the estimated number of persons fell sick and the amount being spent on their treatment per year;

(c) whether a declaration for complete prohibition of smoking was made by him on 2nd October, 2008;

(d) the results of the declaration made by him; and

(e) whether the Government offices and Government and private hospitals, buses and trains have been brought under the purview of prohibition of smoking?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) No such data is maintained by the Government of India. In so far expenditure on advertisement of smoking, it is stated that 'The Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003', prohibits all forms of advertisements, sponsorship and promotion.

(b) As per report of Tobacco Control in India, 2004 approx. 8-9 Lakh persons die annually due to tobacco attributable diseases. No year wise data is maintained relating to sick persons. The health cost of just three tobacco attributable diseases *viz.* cancers, lung disorder and cardio vascular ailment was estimated at Rs. 30,833 Cr. (2002-03).

(c) and (d) The Prohibition of smoking in Public Places Rules, 2008 notified *vide* GSR No. 417(E) dated 30th May, 2008 has come into force from 2nd October, 2008. The new Rules aim to protect the non-smokers from ill effects of passive smoking/environmental tobacco smoke (ETS).

(e) All Government offices, Government and private hospitals, Public transport system such as Buses and Trains are covered and smoking is therefore prohibited in these places.

Malnutrition in the country

96. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that due to malnutrition in the country, 50 per cent of children below 5 years have stunted growth;

(b) if so, what action plan does his Ministry has for proper breast feeding and vitamin supplements in the first two years of children to address malnutrition;

(c) whether any statistics are maintained about malnutrition in the country, State-wise; and

(d) if so, the details thereof with a particular reference to Andhra Pradesh during the last five years?